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no. 37

OLD AND NEW IDEAS CONCERNING THE DIVINITY OF JESUS

BOSTON
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 272 CONGRESS STREET
1900

Sermons by James Freeman Clarke.

The Five Points of Calvinism and the Five Points of the New Theology.

The Sin against the Holy Ghost.

The Introduction to the Gospel of John.

Christ and his Antichrists.

Old and New Ideas concerning the Divinity of Jesus.

Is Probation or Education the End of Life?

The Sabbath — Sunday — or the Lord's Day — which?

Old and New Views concerning the Bible.

The True Coming of Christ.

Agnosticism *versus* Positivism.

The Hercules and Wagoner of To-day; or, State Help *versus* Self-help.

Discussions concerning Conscience and its Development.

The Scientific Basis of Prayer.

The Meaning and Value of the Lord's Supper at this Time.

Some Reasons for Believing in a Future Life.

The Mutual Obligations of Science and Religion.

From Faith to Faith.

A Happy New Year.

The Ministry of the Letter and the Ministry of the Spirit.

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Any one who wishes for reading of this kind is invited to write to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

OLD AND NEW IDEAS CONCERNING THE DIVINITY OF JESUS.

A SERMON was recently delivered in Boston, before the Young Men's Christian Association, by an eminent preacher, on the Divinity of Jesus. I found a full and carefully prepared report of this sermon in one of our journals. As I read it, I said: "This is the way men discussed this question fifty years ago. I perceive by this sermon how far we have gone since, how much better we now understand the vital meaning of Christ's Divinity than we did then." And I think it may be useful to show the difference of the two points of view, — what was then thought to be important in the matter and what is considered important now.

Our preacher began his discourse by declaring that the great question of the present age is, "What think you of Christ?" and said it was the object of his discourse to help his hearers to a correct belief concerning Christ. And, then, he went on to argue that Jesus claimed to be the Eternal God, and that, if he was not this, he was an impostor.

This is the way in which believers in the Trinity argued fifty years ago. First, they asserted that the important question — the most important of all questions — is an intellectual question, a question of correct belief, of right opinion. Where, exactly, do we place

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Jesus in the universe? What is his precise rank in the scale of creation? What title ought he to have? What ought we to say about his nature, dignity, power?

Having thus made a mere intellectual question — a matter of opinion — the most vital of all questions; the believers in the Trinity proceeded to teach what they called the Divinity of Christ, declaring that he claimed to be God, and was so considered to be by his disciples. And, in proof of this, they quoted various texts, taken here and there, without much regard to their connection. One very favorite passage was that in which the Jews accused him of making himself God because he called himself son of God. The argument was that, since the Jews understood him to say that he was God, he must have meant so to be understood.

This argument has always seemed to me rather weak. The Jews accused him of meaning to call himself God when he only called himself son of God. Therefore, he must have meant to call himself God; for how could the Jews be mistaken? To this, the answer would seem to be very simple. They were prejudiced and captious, disposed to find fault, and to pervert the meaning of *all* that he said. They accused him of saying that he would destroy the temple; they accused him of saying that he would give them his flesh to eat in a literal sense. In the same way, they accused him of making himself God, when he had said he was the son of God. If they perverted and misinterpreted his language on these other occasions, why may they not have also misinterpreted it on this occasion?

Having thus agreed with the Jews who charged Jesus with making himself God, the early Trinitarians

did not explain what they meant by this statement. If you say that Jesus is a divine being, if you say that I must call him God, the first thing to be done is to explain what you mean by it. If you do not explain it, you are using words of wind, you are beating the air. When you ask me to say that the man, Christ Jesus, is the supreme God, you are bound, before all things, to tell me how he is the supreme God. It is not what we say, but what we mean, that is important. Is he divine in the sense in which all nature is divine, all life divine, the soul of man divine, truth, beauty, justice, love divine? When you say that Jesus was divine, do you mean that God was with him; that he was led, inspired, upheld by God; that God was revealed in his life, his words, his works? If so, we understand what it means, and we can accept that meaning. We believe so, too.

But this explanation was not enough to satisfy the old Trinitarians. They declared that it was not enough to say that "God was *in* Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," but that we must say that Christ is God, co-equal with the Father, co-eternal, the Supreme Being, Maker and Ruler of the boundless universe.

Then, again, we are obliged to ask what is meant by saying that Jesus Christ is God; that he, this person, Jesus, is God? The person is indicated by the personal pronouns "I," "he," "me," "him." Where does Jesus say, "I am God"; "I am equal with God"; "I am infinite in power, wisdom, goodness: I am the Supreme Being"? He says, on one occasion, "My Father is greater than I." Here the personal Jesus

is declared by himself to be inferior to God. On another occasion, he says, "I can do nothing of myself." Again, he says, "I am not alone: the Father is with me,"—distinguishing his person from that of his Father. He, the personal Christ, suffered; but God cannot suffer. He was tempted, but God cannot be tempted. He prayed to God, but God cannot pray to himself. He was ignorant of the day and hour of his own coming, but God knows everything. He increased in knowledge and wisdom, in favor with God and man; but God, who is the All-perfect Being, cannot increase and grow, and become more and more in favor with himself. Christ died on the cross, but God cannot die. For such reasons, the Unitarians thought it improper to say that Christ was God, and declined doing so.

Nevertheless, it is no doubt true that the Scripture teaches a most intimate union between Jesus, the man, and the Infinite Spirit,—union, but not identity,—such a union as was probably never asserted of any other human being. I think no one but Jesus ever said, "I and my Father are one"; "He who has seen me has seen the Father"; "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; "All power is given unto me, in heaven and earth." No doubt, these great words assert an intimate relation between Christ and God, explained by himself to mean such a relation as also might exist between his disciples and himself. If he has all power, it is *given* to him, he receives it from God. He declares that he can do nothing of himself. Nevertheless, we must always come back to this: that in the personal consciousness

of Jesus there existed a conviction of his intimate relation with his Father, which sets him by himself in the history of religion.

After all, then, the main question between Unitarians and Trinitarians is almost reduced to a question of words. It is a matter, not of religion, but of logic, — of the proper use of language. It is not "What shall we believe?" but "How shall we express our belief?"

It is evident that, when Unitarians and Trinitarians study the character of Jesus, they must see nearly or quite the same things: the same revelations of divine beauty, truth, love, come before the minds of both. They both read the Sermon on the Mount, the story of the Good Samaritan and of the Prodigal Son, the pathos of the Garden of Gethsemane, and the last conversation with the disciples. In these words, in these scenes, God draws near to man. The infinite tenderness shines through the human soul as the sunlight passes through clear glass. The human soul of Jesus is the glass: the sun that shines through him is God. The poet Herbert says: —

> "A man who looks on glass,
> On it may stay his eye;
> Or, if he pleases, through it pass,
> And so the heaven espy."

When we stay our eye on the glass, we see the man Christ Jesus, the Son of Man; when we look through him, we see God. Trinitarians, dwelling on the divine light which shines through him, say, "He is God." Unitarians think it more logical, and also more Scriptural to say, "God is in him."

It is chiefly a question of words, of logic. Certainly, as such, it is not unimportant. But it is not a question of religion. Religion consists in the vision of divine truth and beauty, not the way in which we afterward talk about what we have seen. And, unless we have that personal vision of God, all the arguments of theologians and of the most powerful discourses are only sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. A man may come into the pulpit, and speak with the tongue of a prophet or an angel. He may terrify us into believing, by pictures of future woe and a day of judgment, but the fear thus created by another's words is not religion. Jesus blessed the faith of Peter, because flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but his Father in heaven. It was not hearsay faith, not lazy acquiescence in any popular theology, but the honest utterance of what Peter saw and felt in his own soul.

Nevertheless, there are two fundamental laws concerning Christ and his divinity which have divided the Christian world, and divide it still. The first we will call the metaphysical view of Christ's divinity, the other the moral view of his divinity. The metaphysical view was most widely held in the earliest ages: the moral view prevails more extensively now. I will attempt to describe them and to compare them.

During about four hundred years, from the year 300 to 700 of our era, the sharpest controversies raged around the questions concerning the nature of Christ. Six different discussions distracted the Church during this period, and six doctrines were finally decided to be heretical. These were the Sabellian, Arian, Nestorian, Eutychian, Monophysite, and Mono

thelitic. All referred to the transcendental or metaphysical nature of Christ,— not what Christ is to us, not what he shows us of God, not how he mediates divine truth and reveals divine love, but what Christ is in his essential being. What the majority finally accepted became orthodox, and was put into the creeds of the Church. The majority condemned the Sabellians for considering the Father, Son, and Spirit as three forms of the same being; they condemned the Arians for saying that Christ was a created being, the Nestorians for making too much of a distinction between the two natures of Christ, the Eutychians for making too little of the distinction, the Monophysites for saying there was only one nature in Christ, the Monothelites for saying there was only one will. After all these heresies had been condemned, one by one, the opinions of the majority were finally summed up in the Athanasian Creed, which gives the whole metaphysics of the Trinity, defines the nature of the Deity in all its details, and ends by denouncing eternal damnation as the unquestionable doom of all who do not accept its unintelligible definitions. As some creatures which belonged mostly to a fossil age have a few living representatives still, so this Athanasian Creed, which belongs to the Palæozoic period of Christianity, survives in the Liturgy of the Church of England.

This metaphysical notion of Christ's divinity still remains, and is in the orthodox creeds. Meantime, a very different and, as it seems to me, much higher view has grown up, and is daily becoming more the faith of the Church. This I call the moral view of the divinity of Jesus. I distinguish the two as follows.

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The first view of Christ's divinity ascribes to him all the infinite perfections of the Supreme Being. It calls him co-equal and co-eternal with the Father,— omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent,— God by his nature, God in his person. It asserts that the man Christ Jesus, born in Bethlehem, was the eternal God, without beginning or end; that the Christ who lived, taught, suffered, and died in Palestine was the omnipresent being who sustains the myriad suns and stars throughout the universe. It claims a titular divinity for him; asserts that we must call him God, or that he will be offended, as some foolish men are offended, if their titles are not given them. It makes him divine because of a mysterious and unintelligible divinity of nature and substance, not because of a divinity of character. His divinity is not the divine goodness which can be seen and loved in his life and character, but some dark background of being which must be believed and confessed, though it cannot be understood. This is the metaphysical view of the divinity of Christ.

The moral view teaches us that Christ is divine, because we see in his character a manifestation of the character of God, in his goodness a revelation of divine goodness, in his hatred of sin a type of God's displeasure with evil, in his tenderness to the sinner the evidence of God's forgiving love.

And, now, what brings us nearer to God? What seems to us the most divine thing in the universe? I stand in awe before the vast mystery of creation. I look out on the innumerable worlds which roll through space, and am amazed at the thought that these millions of stars, with all their planets, are but the borders

of that infinite universe which is everywhere filled, moved, sustained by God. Each of these suns, with all its attendant planets, is in rapid motion, each moving carefully along its invisible path, each obeying a divine law. Some Great Power holds all in the hollow of his hand, some mighty command guides these terrific forces, so that no one interferes with any other; and the result is safe order, majestic peace. In all this, I see Divine Power.

From the heavens, I come down to the earth. Here I see innumerable adaptations, wonderful varieties, all consenting to progress, growth, life. Infinite tribes of living creatures people land, sea, and air. Each has its home, its food, its occupation, each its instinct or intellect which guides it, each its pleasures and activities. By some all-penetrating laws, they are kept in their spheres. They come and go, live and die. Each little infusorial creature, examined under the microscope, has its subtle organization, its delicate limbs, feelers, senses. "These all wait on Thee, and thou givest them their food in due season; thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good." In all this, I see and reverence divine wisdom.

I come to man. I see in every part of the world human beings made for growth and development. I observe the joy of childhood everywhere the same, the happy love of youth and maiden, the delightful activity of work, the satisfaction of knowledge, the triumph of success. And I notice also that in all lands and times man has been taught by some divine instinct to look up out of the seen and temporal into the unseen and eternal. He looks out of his little earthly day into

some heavenly world, and adores God, calling him Brahma or Boodh, Amun-Ra, Zeus, or Jupiter. Whatever the name, he believes in higher beings to whom he can pray, and who will hear his prayer. He looks out of the anguish of bereavement to the bliss of reunion. He looks across the river of death to some high immortality and peace. Conscious of sin, he believes in a forgiving love. He is made strong to endure; he is enabled to cling to truth and right; he is lifted above himself by mighty convictions. He is enabled to obey the awful voice of conscience, to renounce selfish desires, and become generous. He devotes himself to his country, and goes out to die in her cause. He is able patiently to endure misrepresentation and calumny in obeying the truth. He bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, made strong within by some divine faith. Whence comes to him this power of righteousness? God, when he created man, put into him this seed of virtue, making him like himself in thus giving him something of his own image. Thus, in these higher qualities of the human soul, we find God, and see something more than his power or his wisdom: we see also his love. He has made us to share his own highest blessedness, the bliss of becoming capable of gracious goodness.

Now, in all that we thus see of God, which is the most divine element? Is it power? is it wisdom? or is it his goodness? Is not goodness the most divine thing we can see in the universe?

Man, we are told in the Old Testament, was "made in the image of God." The New Testament tells us

that we are "partakers of the divine nature." We are in the image of God, because we are spiritual beings, endowed with reason, with active power, and with moral sentiments. All are divine, but which is most divine?

I see wonderful power of will in great conquerors, like Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon. The mass of men are dazzled by this kind of glory. They bow before a great general, a strong man, who has shown energy of will. This worship of outward success and military ability seems to me dangerous, because of the great danger of making military success the highway to dignity, affluence, and honor.

I ask again, If power is divine, is not there something more divine? What brings us nearest to God? It has been permitted us in our day to see men and women giving themselves to some great human good, something which promised them none of the rewards of this world. Some have devoted themselves to breaking the chains of the slave, and by their long labors four millions of men have risen out of bondage into freedom. We have seen others consecrating their lives cheerfully to help the prisoner, the insane, the poor, the blind, the deaf and dumb, to open the blind eyes, to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. They have labored for education, for peace, for human improvement; to bring comfort to the homes of the poor; to provide hospitals for the sick. We have seen Livingstone wearing out health and life among the savage tribes of Africa to bring to them the knowledge of a Saviour's love. Which has shown us most of God,—the men of intellect and

power — the orators, writers, statesmen, generals whom fame attends — or those men and women whose lives were full of the simple desire to do good to their fellow-men?

Goodness is the highest, the most divine thing we know. Thank God, the world is full of it. It is not to be found solely in the missionary and philanthropist. The best goodness is that we have seen in quiet homes, — silent, unpretending, ever faithful, always sure. It is the goodness of conscientious lives, of upright conduct, of unfaltering integrity. It is the goodness of humility, affection, truthfulness, self-sacrifice, generosity.

> "The primal duties shine aloft like stars,
> The charities which soothe and bless and save
> Are scattered round the feet of men like flowers."

If we have any faith in God, any love for him, it has come to us, I think, not chiefly from books or sermons, but from the sight of good fathers and mothers, noble friends, innocent children. Every trait of purity has revealed to us something of the holiness of God. Every act of self-sacrificing generosity has taught us to believe in the divine love. By the goodness we have seen, we come to believe in the goodness of him whom we have not seen.

And, now, Jesus Christ stands before the world as its highest example of all this goodness. Deny his miracles, if you please, criticise the letter of the Gospels as much as you can, you cannot deny that the life of Jesus as shown in the Gospels has filled the world with a new form of goodness, higher than any before

known. He is the ideal in all our souls of the noblest purity. He is the image in our minds of self-denying love. He has taught the world to call God "Father!" He has made forgiveness of injuries, love of enemies, devotion to mankind, seem possible. He has shown us the most angelic loftiness of soul stooping to the lowliest offices of love. If all human virtue is a revelation of God, is not this, then, the highest of all revelations? He who has seen this life and love has seen the Father. His elevation of soul makes him the image of the invisible God, the first-born of the creation. This is his true divinity,— not any mysterious and metaphysical consubstantiality of nature, but the actual fact that he does reveal to us the divine love, and make it a reality to our hearts.

Theologians who belong to the new period of larger thought may be Trinitarians or Unitarians. But they know that this difference is a question of logic, not religion. It is like the question of meats of which Paul treats: "I know that there is nothing clean or unclean in itself." The Lord Jesus, Paul said, had persuaded him so. He had shown him, by his own teaching, that what goeth into the mouth doth not defile a man. But Paul would not offend a brother by disputes on this point. I am a Unitarian, my brother is a Trinitarian. Each of us will keep his opinion. But we know that our opinions and our statements are not faith. Our faith consists in seeing God and trusting in him.

The modern Church is thus getting rid of its sectarian rancor, its narrow bigotry, its theological bitterness, by rising to a higher plane of thought. The in-

nocuous lightning flashes far below our feet. The storms rage in a region lower down. This is the way in which the prayer of Jesus will be fulfilled, and the Church become one: "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Until the Church ceases from its small disputes, the world will not be converted to the Master. Sectarians will continue to wrangle and debate, but serious thinkers will take another way. They will try to find points wherein they agree, not those where they differ. They will see what truth there is on both sides, and will accept it. So, by degrees, war will cease in the Church, and the Church be one. And then there will be a chance for the world also to have peace, nations to have peace, social life to have peace, and Christ to reign, the Prince of Peace; and the angels once more may chant their hymn of praise, and thank God that there is peace among men.

It is not what we think about Christ, or what we say about Christ, that avails anything, but what we see of God in him,—and still more what we see and feel and do about Christ. He has said that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will condemn those who listened to his words and did not repent. He has said that many will come from the east and west to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, while the children of the kingdom are cast out. There is probably many a free religionist with a minimum of intellectual faith in his head, who is more of a true Christian than some great preacher who is dealing

damnation round the land against the enemies of God. "For not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

To believe in the divinity of Christ, then, is not to hold this or that opinion concerning him, but to see his truth as divine, and obey it; to see his character as divine, and imitate it; to see his spirit as divine, and to partake of it.

Jesus was very lonely in this world. No one understood him. He sought, in every way, to teach his disciples; but they continued very ignorant. He longed for sympathy and affection, and his disciples deserted him at the first alarm. But, though lonely, he was not alone; for the Father was with him. He rested always on that divine heart. This was part of the divinity of Jesus, that he always trusted in his Father's love, and leaned on that in the darkest hour.

We, also, are lonely in this world: all of us are more or less lonely. There are hours in which we seem entirely left to ourselves. There are times in which we say, "No man cares for my soul." Then, if we can trust in God, as Jesus trusted him, and can lean on that infinite tenderness, we really see what was divine in Jesus, though we may never have made up our mind about his nature, or essence, or rank in the universe; though we have not even called ourselves by his name, or said to him, "Lord! Lord!" in any sense whatever.

When Jesus was in the world, he went among publicans and sinners. He said to the sinful, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." He was a channel of God's forgiving love to his children. He spoke

peace to the souls broken by remorse, sunk in doubt, who were without God and hope in the world. He thus became the Mediator of heavenly peace.

We, also, are conscious of sin. We all have temptations which easily beset us, some of one sort, some of another. There are hours in which we feel that we have gone so far astray that we can never return. Many persons who never use the word sin, or say they are sinners, are yet tormented by their consciences, are never contented with themselves, are never quite at peace within. Life goes hard with them; duty is a burden, a perpetual struggle. Then, if we can see the divine fatherly compassion which Jesus has revealed, if we can look at the face of the Father, and say, "My Father, help me, save me, forgive me my sin, and make me strong to do my work," we truly see the divinity of Christ; for God comes to us through him, to give us rest, comfort, and peace.

And so, amid the sorrows and bereavements of this earth, we see the divinity of Jesus, when we see God as he saw him,—the Universal Providence, without whom not a sparrow drops dead on the ground. Then, in the midst of death, we believe in life; in the midst of disaster and disappointment, we have confidence that all things are right and good. We look up, and take our Father's hand, and are led by him.

We have faith in what was most divine in Jesus, when we do what he says. "Why call ye me Lord! Lord! and do not the things I say?" Whoever devotes himself to helping his fellow-men has the truest faith in all that was most divine in Jesus. Christianity, according to Jesus, consists in loving God with all our

heart and our neighbor as ourselves. All worship of God must lead to the service of man. All true prayer to God consists in seeking strength, light, love, peace, from him, that we may use it for others. And Christ is truly divine to us when he leads us into this service of his Father.

This view relieves us of all useless and pernicious anxiety about our theology. So long as men thought that their spiritual safety depended on correct opinion, they could have no peace; for no one can ever be certain that his opinions are the truest. They also soon ceased to think for themselves, and let their clergyman think for them. There is a book called *Margaret Percival* written by an English High Church writer, which illustrates this. The heroine is an English churchwoman, but meets a Roman Catholic priest, who tells her she will be lost forever, if she does not become a Roman Catholic. Thereupon, she is about to join the Roman Catholic Church, when her uncle, an English rector, arrives, and tells her she will be guilty of the sin of schism, and will be lost forever, unless she stays in the Church of England. The priest threatens her with damnation, if she does not come; her uncle threatens her with endless perdition, if she does. She finally stays where she is, not from conviction, but because she is there, and because blind repose is no more dangerous than blind change. Here the book ends, with this lame and impotent conclusion. But I believe there is a supplement, called *Margaret Percival in America*, in which she is led to see that a person may be a Christian in all churches and all theologies; because Christianity is not an opinion nor a profession, but a life.

Thus, whenever Jesus brings us to God, he is divine to us, in the highest and best way, the way he himself would most desire. He said that he did not come to be ministered to, but to minister, and give his life to break the chains of sin and set the oppressed free. Nor did he come to claim high honors or demand a high seat in the universe, or a great name above all other names. He humbled himself, and was exalted. He made himself of no reputation, and has become the object of human worship. When I hear men saying that we shall offend Jesus if we do not call him God, and that he will refuse to save us unless we accept some theory of his nature, I say sadly, "How little you know the Christ of the Gospels!" What did he care for rank or title, for honor and position? His great glory is that he was willing to be despised and rejected, to be misunderstood and avoided, if only he could bring the world to God, and help men to see the Father as he saw him. He never wished men to say, but to do.

If we see God in Christ, then we do what he desires. He would willingly be forgotten, so that his Father be remembered. Constantly, he asserts, concerning his word and works, that it is not he who does and speaks, but the Father who dwells in him. Jesus is most divine when thinking least of his divinity, just as a perfect object-glass in a telescope is not seen itself, but shows us the infinite heavens.

Let others, then, honor Jesus by calling him God: we will give him the honor dearest to his heart by seeing God revealed in his life. Let others explain as well as they can the metaphysics of his divinity: we

will be led by him to his Father and our Father, his God and our God. Let others teach that he is the omniscient being: enough for us that he knows our needs, our sorrows, our sins, and has known how to bring us comfort and peace. Let others talk of his omnipotence: we will rejoice that he has power on earth to forgive sins, to reveal God's truth to babes, to undo the heavy burden, to abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light. This was the divinity which he himself claimed. He did not say, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because I am the second person in the Trinity," but he said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty those that are bruised."

Let us thank God that the metaphysical divinity of Christ is passing out of men's minds, and that his moral divinity is being better known and loved by all sects of Christians. In the early centuries, the streets of Alexandria and Antioch ran red with the blood of Christians, killing each other because of their difference of opinion in regard to the nature of Christ or of the Trinity. We have risen above this. A few hundred years ago, any one who questioned the scholastic doctrine of the Trinity would be put to death in England. Because Servetus, a great man and a reformer, denied the doctrine of the Trinity as held by Calvin, Calvin used his influence to have him burnt at the stake with the most barbarous cruelty, Calvin himself acting the part of informer, prosecutor, and judge. Such power did the metaphysical doctrine have within a few hundred years.

The true Christ, the Son of God, is no metaphysical doctrine, but a brother, a friend, a human being like ourselves, so full of divine light and love as to be the best manifestation we have of the Living God. Not Nature in all her majesty and beauty so reveals the Creator as the divine life of the Son of Man. Well might angels sing at his birth, Glory to God and peace to men!

The man Christ Jesus, this purely human brother of ours, became the Son of God by entire obedience and perfect trust. To him, God was always Father and Friend; and, by living in that spirit, he helps us all to become also the sons of God.

He has no glory that he would not gladly share with us all. He desires no title of honor that he would not give to his brethren. This is his highest honor, to have desired no exclusive honor. Because he humbled himself, and became the servant of all men, God has highly exalted him. But he tells us that all who humble themselves, to do good, will be exalted also. The name which is above every name is the name he wishes us all to share with him. And, therefore, we may well keep Christmas with joy; for it is the birthday of our best friend, our dearest helper, our elder brother, the head of the household of mankind, who is most divine because he is so human, and who, more than any other, brings us near to the infinite love of God, and reveals God to us as our Father and Inspirer; "Path, Motive, Guide, Original, and End."

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